

WHEN our Sports Editor, Stuart Earp, asked me if I would like to contribute to this feature I was delighted. Let's face it we all like to reminisce.

I hope the following will give many faithful supporters pleasure and enable them to relive the last encounters between Wycombe Wanderers and professional league sides.

The match at Northampton in 1958 was played in front of a crowd of some 10,000 and on a very heavy pitch. One could not accuse the crowd of being partisan for at least 50 per cent were from Wycombe. And most certainly made their presence felt to the Wanderers players, as indeed they always do.

The pitch itself was perfectly flat being part of the outfield of the Northampton cricket ground, regrettably this meant that the majority of the spectators were on three sides only, and I don't think any player enjoys this, for it takes away some of the atmosphere.

As for the match itself, bearing in mind it took place some 15 years ago, I remember few specific instances. I do remember that it was a hard game in the mud with the Wanderers players lasting as well as their professional opponents. The general consensus of opinion then was that the Blues had not deserved to lose.

My own impression was that we had played well enough to win but (and doesn't it still happen today) we had not taken our chances.

For many of the XI who had played that day it was their first experience of playing against a league side in a competitive game, an experience we all enjoyed, except the result.

The following year, as a result of another good run we found ourselves drawn away to Watford, who were then a division IV side. This game had a much more local flavour, with one of our team, Denis Atkins, having

his employer on the Watford Board of Directors.

In our preparation for this match we had been fortunate to watch our opponents in their

By JIM MORING



JIM MORING played over 300 matches for Wycombe Wanderers during a spell of 10 years with the club from 1950-60. He played in both F.A. Cup games against Northampton and Watford and captained the Blues in his last three years with the club.

replay with Cheltenham Town. So we thought we were a little wiser as to their prowess.

We also had the B.B.C. sports crew down to watch us in training and to talk to us about our thoughts on the game. I remember telling the interviewer I thought our chances were very good, we were a strong side, feared in the south in the Amateur game, and could call upon many experienced

players under the managership of Sid Cann.

When I saw myself on the "box" on Friday evening my immediate thought was "doesn't that sound corny!"

And the result the next day, a 5-1 defeat, brought me many amusing letters and notes from 'friends'.

As to the game itself there is no doubt we were beaten by the professional "know-how." Although their last two goals came in the final ten minutes, they were always that little bit quicker than we on the ball, and harder in the tackle.

I do remember the size of the crowd, some 24,000, and I am sure many clubs would like to see that kind of attendance in the early F.A. Cup rounds now.

In recalling these two games I would like to remind you of the names of some of the players involved who in their turn gave such service to the Wanderers and enjoyment to supporters. Denis Syrett, Denis Atkins, Paul Bates, Jack Tomlin, John Beck, Ron Fryer, John Fisher, Fred Lawson, Jim Truett, Ray Howson, Gerry Free.